

DETERMINANTS OF RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS AMONG UNIVERSITY LECTURERS IN ACADEMIC JOURNALS: A STUDY OF THE CROSS RIVER UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, NIGERIA.

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ABSTRACT

Of all the expected duties of an academic, it has been reported that, research takes precedence. This study examined the determinants of research publications among Lecturers in the University. Data from 100 Lecturers from 10 randomly selected departments were used. Findings revealed that, a significant relationship exist between the frequency of research publications and the environment of research. There is thus, a dire need to increase funding in the area of research and make the environment of research less restrictive to the obstacles that limits research publications.

KEYWORDS: Research Publications, Cross River University of Technology (CRUTECH).

INTRODUCTION

The basic idea behind research is an attempt by man to re-examine the world around him by asking questions and also possibly proffering or attempting answers to certain phenomenon that are intriguing to both him and/or society.

Enoh (2004) thus defines research as a scholarly or scientific investigation or experimentation arrived at the discovery of facts. He posited further that such investigation or experimentation must be based on the revision of hitherto to accepted theories, premises or laws. This is why as a process of critical inquiry; Popper (2002) stated that judgement is normally reserved until empirical process takes precedence over speculations.

From the foregoing, it surmises to state that, research is a very indispensable tool for stakeholders in societal and development problems.

Eboh, cited in Anugom *et al* (2002) points to the fact that, research provides the basis for decision making by policy makers. He further posits that through research, a country can devise alternative policies, measures and strategies and examine their implications. This is more so because according to Nwagu (1991) and Ada *et al* (1971), the knowledge contained in research publications are supposed to represent the most recent or latest ideas. In his contribution, Peil (2004) stated the importance of research by pointing out the dynamism and vibrancy inherent there in. He stated further that “every research work has to initially study to seek out” and thereafter seek out again and take another more careful look to find out or search for new horizons or down turns within the phenomenon under study. Research attitudes thus presumes that either the first look, investigation or premise and every later look, may be prone to errors and so becomes necessary to examine and re-examine in order to derive effective, valid, reliable and practical solutions to problems.

In the academic environment, of the three expected duties of an academic: teaching, research and services, research takes precedence. This is evident in such age slogan as “publish or perish” and the attachment of promotion of lecturers is being based on the number of research publications that they have. This awareness is the propelling force that has always impelled lecturers to embark on research publication from time to time either in local or international journals.

Generally, knowledge, and particularly new knowledge as earlier stated is derived from research (Olukpe 2002). Two types of research – the basic and applied – have been identified. Basic research is knowledge derived from new findings or discoveries while applied research is the application of these findings to solve practical solutions or problems. It is pertinent to point out here that there is an inter-relatedness of two forms of research. Olukpe (2002) posits that basic research oils these the wheel of applied research. In other words, there is a synergy between the two.

In spite of all the above recognized importance of research however, Alao (1994) noted quite frustratingly that most journals that are found on the shelves of very many Nigerian Universities and even research based institutions more often have a five year lag before their next publications. This problem is further aggravated by the regularity or frequency of research papers churned out by academics, which is said to be low. It is therefore necessary to take a look at some of the determinants of research publications among University lecturers in academic journals.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

In other to properly focus this study, some concepts need brief clarifications. University lecturers, frequency of publication, local and international journals, university environment.

A University lecturer is based here to mean all those who are engaged in teaching, research and services within the services of the university. Specifically, in the Cross River University of Technology, they are those from the rank of an assistant lecturer and who hold a degree that is higher than the first degree in their various disciplines.

Frequency of publication denotes the regularity in terms of number of research publications per year as evident by either an acceptance letter from the editors of a journal or its actual publication in any of the authors of such journals.

Local / international journals as used here is a neutral concept applied to the location between the publishing house and the author(s) of a work. In other words, any journal that is outside the national geographic borders of an author is tagged "International" while those published within the geographic borders is known as "Local" journal. There is no suggestion here to the superiority or inferiority status of any one of these two nomenclatures because what is assumed Local in one situation to an author is counted as international for another author who lives across the border where that same journal is published.

University environment is used here to mean that environment which supports those facilities that creates an enabling access for the conduct of research and research activities.

It has to do with everything that stimulate and influence the behaviour of the individual (University lecturers) and group (University Community) such as availability of the internet services, inadequate number of systems / computers, interruption in power supply, severe breakdown, etc.

METHODOLOGY

Survey method was used. A total of 100 lecturers were randomly sampled from 10 departments that cut across the five campus of the Cross River University of Technology. Of these total numbers of respondents, eighty-four were males, sixteen were females.

Table 1: Sample distribution of respondents by faculty, department, sex and campus location.

	Faculty	Department	No. of Respondents		Campus
			Male	Female	
1.	Engineering	Electrical	9	1	Calabar
2.	Mass	Mass Communication	8	2	Calabar
3.	Communication	Bio Chemistry	8	2	Okuku
	Medical	Physiology	9	1	Okuku
4.	Sciences	Accounting	7	3	Ogoja
		Bus. Administration	8	2	Ogoja
5.	Management	Agric. Econs/Ext.	9	1	Obubra
	Sciences	Forestry	10	-	Obubra
6.		Physical & Health	8	2	Akamkpa
	Agriculture and	Guidance & Counseling	7	3	Akamkpa
	Forestry				
	Education		84	16	

Source: Field work 2007.

Data for this study was gathered with the use of questionnaires, which was carefully designed in accordance with the specification of the research. The first section, that is, section “A” elicited response on the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents. Section “B” on the other hand contained questions on the issue under investigation, which is the determinant of research publications among university lecturers in academic journals. Items included in this section consisted of variables such as number of publications by respondents (in both local and international journals), sources of funds for research, access to research facilities. Data were analyzed with simple descriptive statistics in simple percentages and in addition, the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient (r) was used to test the relationship that exists between the frequency of research publications and the environment of research itself.

PRESENTATION OF RESULT / DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS:

Table 2: Number of published research findings, according to departments and location of campuses.

S/N	Department	Location of Campus	No. of Research publications	Percentage
1.	Electrical Engineering	Calabar	28	.07
2.	Mass Communication	Calabar	37	.09
3.	Biochemistry	Okuku	26	.07
4.	Physiology	Okuku	22	.06
5.	Accounting	Ogoja	46	.12
6.	Business Admin.	Ogoja	40	.10
7.	Agric. Econs/Ext.	Obubra	47	.12
8.	Forestry	Obubra	39	.10
9.	Physical and Health	Akamkpa	52	.13
10	Edu.	Akmakpa	64	.16
	Guidance and Counseling		401	

From Table 2, a total of 401 research publications were carried out by lecturers, in ten sampled departments of the University. Arising from the above therefore, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) was used to test if any relationship exists between the frequency of research publication and the environment of research itself. Specifically, the following hypothesis was tested.

H_0 : There is no significant relationship between the frequency of research publications among university lecturers and the environment of research.

H_1 : Environment is a significant factor in the frequency of research publications among university lecturers.

Decision rule: Accept or retain the null hypothesis if the calculated (r) value is equal to or less than the tabulated (r) value at 0.05 level of significance with 399 degrees of freedom. On the other hand, reject the null and accept the alternate hypothesis.

The dependent variable in the above stated hypothesis is thus, the frequency of research publications while the independent variable is the environment of research. To test for this hypothesis, data from the independent variable was extracted into sums, squares, products and sums of squares.

The summarized data were then subjected to statistical analysis using the Pearson product moment correlation analytical procedure – r . The result of the analysis is as presented on the Table 2.

Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r), analysis of the relationship between the frequency of research publication and the environment of research.

N = 401

Variable	Σx	Σx^2	Σxy	df	r – cal
	Σy	Σy^2			
Environment of research (x)	4384	15625	31102	399	0.547
Frequency of research Publications (y)	1975	18963			

Source: Field work 2007 *Significant at $P < 0.5$, $df = 399$, Crit. – $r = 0.196$

From Table 3, the calculated r – value of 0.547 was found to be greater than the critical r – value of 0.196 needed for significance at 0.05 alpha level with 399 degree of freedom. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected and the alternate hypothesis accepted. This means that environment is a significant factor in the frequency of research publications among university lecturers. Put succinctly, this means that university lecturers who are close to or have access to Internet services, enhanced remunerations and relative ease in accessing funds from either government or the private sector among other enabling factors have a higher frequency of research publications than those who do not.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Several factors can be identified as constraining the amount of research work in circulation. Primarily however, the environment of research as perceived in terms of better remunerations, ease in accessing funds and accessibility to Internet services are major determinants.

Research, through its impact on education is an important determinant of development (Grabowski and Shield 1996). Research is a priority at any effort towards fostering growth. This is more so that Nigeria's capacity to generate knowledge and participate in knowledge, society has continued to decline over the years. It is therefore the recommendation of this paper that Internet services be provided in all the campuses of the Cross River University of Technology at a lower subscription rate, which should be subsidized by the university authority. Also, there ought to be an alternate source of power supply to avoid the frequent interruptions from the national grid. Again, donor agencies should make it relatively easier to access funds once they conform to the authenticity / genuineness of a particular research project.

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